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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Willie L. May, who passed away on March 28, 2012; and

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WHEREAS, Willie May was born on November 11, 1936, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama; his parents were Louise Higgins and Bennie May; he married Norma Jean Butler on July 5, 1964; and

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WHEREAS, Willie May moved to the Chicago area at an early age and grew up in Robbins; he attended Blue Island Community High School (now Eisenhower High School), where he participated in various sports; in 1955, he led the school to an Illinois State Championship and won gold medals in the 120-yard high hurdles, the 180-yard low hurdles, and the 880-yard relay; he subsequently attended the university of Colorado before graduating from Indiana University, where he won 7 Big Ten championships in the hurdles from 1957 to 1959; he also earned his master's degree in physical education from Indiana University in 1966; and

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WHEREAS, Willie May competed in the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, Italy, where he won the silver medal in the 110-meter hurdles after a photo finish; he also won the silver medal at the 1963 Pan-American Games; and

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1 WHEREAS, Willie May began his long and distinguished career
2 in education during the 1960s; in 1967, he began teaching at
3 Evanston Township High School (ETHS); while at ETHS, he served
4 as both a teacher and as an assistant boys track and field
5 coach; during his tenure as assistant coach, the school won
6 State titles in 1970, 1971, 1972, and 1974; after taking over
7 as head coach in 1975, he led the Evanston Wildcats to 26
8 conference titles, including 24 consecutive titles, from 1976
9 to 1999, as well as 5 IHSA State trophies; in 1983, he became
10 the first African-American athletic director at ETHS, a
11 position he held until his retirement from the teacher and
12 athletic director positions in 2000; after his retirement, he
13 continued to serve as an assistant coach at ETHS while
14 participating in numerous church activities; and

15 WHEREAS, Willie May was inducted into the Indiana
16 University Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame in 2000, the
17 Illinois Track and Cross Country Coaches Association Hall of
18 Fame in 2007, and the Chicagoland Sports Hall of Fame in 2010;
19 he was also named one of the most notable athletes in the
20 history of Blue Island (Eisenhower) High School and is a member
21 of the school's hall of fame; and

22 WHEREAS, As a child, Willie May attended Wheeler Chapel CME
23 Church in Robbins, where he accepted Christ at an early age; he

1 later became a devoted member of St. James AME Church in
2 Chicago for over 30 years; at St. James, he served as the Head
3 Usher of the Usher Board and a member of the church's Trustee
4 Board; and

5 WHEREAS, Willie May is survived by his loving wife, Norma
6 May; his daughters, Kristian May (Paul) Stewart and Karen May;
7 his grandsons, Myles Stewart and Chase Stewart; his
8 sister-in-law, Pearlene Cunningham; his brother-in-law, John
9 Butler III; his aunt, Anna Weatherspoon; his uncles, James
10 (Jean) Young, Dock (Charlotte) Young, and Isaac Eaves; his 2
11 nephews and one niece; and his many cousins, other family
12 members, and friends; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL
14 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
15 his family and friends, the passing of Willie L. May; and be it
16 further

17 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
18 presented to the family of Willie May as an expression of our
19 sympathy.